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The Road to Collectivization

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Dear Mr. Rogers:

The Chinese Communists have started on the long, hard road to agricultural collectivization, even though their current land redistribution program is not scheduled for completion in some major areas of China until next Spring.

The agrarian reform policies followed by the Chinese Communists to attract peasant support during their struggle for power and to consolidate power since 1949 have been based upon redistribution of land and "liquidation of the landlords as a class." But it is now clear that this program is merely a first step, preliminary to collectivization.

The general outline of the process of collectivization in China has taken shape this year. It calls for a transitional period, lasting several years, in which peasants will be organized first into mutual-aid teams and then into agricultural producers' cooperatives, in preparation for ultimate collectivization of a more complete sort. At the same time, state farms, machine tractor stations, centers supplying improved tools, and experimental collective farms are to be organized to point the way toward the final goal.

It is obvious that the Chinese Communists in their plans for collectivization are following the road already travelled by the Soviet Union, but it also appears that they are capitalizing on Soviet experience in an attempt to avoid some of the pitfalls previously encountered by the Russians.

On June 30 of this year, on the second anniversary of the promulgation of the 1950 Agrarian Reform Law, Peking announced that "agrarian reform has been completed in the overwhelmingly great part of China." More specifically it was claimed that except for areas inhabited by racial minorities (where implementation of the program is postponed), agrarian reform has been wholly completed in Northeast China, Inner Mongolia, and North China, 85 percent completed (in terms of total farm population) in Northwest China, 90 percent completed in East China, and 81 percent completed in both the Central-South and Southwest regions of China. With the

exception of minority areas, the remaining districts - Sinkiang Province and parts of Tsinghai, Kansu, Yunnan, Kweichow, Kwangtung, and Kwangsi - are scheduled to have completed agrarian reform either by this Winter or the Spring of 1953. Chinese Communist claims on the progress of land redistribution may be an exaggeration, since reports in mainland publications indicate that they are encountering serious problems in carrying out agrarian reform in South China, and that the struggle against landlords, "bandits", "despots", and "counter-revolutionaries" continues in many areas where in theory these elements were previously liquidated. But it does appear to be true that by the Spring of next year the 1950 Agrarian Reform Law will have been applied to all major regions of the country.

The general situation in those areas where the existing agrarian reform law has been thoroughly implemented might be described briefly as follows. A segment of the rural population classified by the Communists or their revolutionary People's Tribunals as "counter-revolutionaries", "bandits", and "despots" has been physically liquidated. The landlords, who under the old regime usually were the community leaders, have been "liquidated as a class"; their land and most of their capital has been confiscated and distributed to landless and poor peasants. In the process of class warfare against the landlords, the middle, poor and landless peasants have been organized into peasant associations under Communist control, and the activists among them have emerged to join with Communist Party members and leaders of Communist-organized mass organizations of various sorts to form a new rural elite and bureaucracy. The landlords' holdings, distributed by the peasant associations, have become the private property of the persons to whom they were distributed. Although the amount of land held by so-called middle peasants has been the standard for general equalization of land ownership, however, there are still variations in the acreage owned by peasants. This is due partly to the fact that, according to current Chinese Communist policy, the "rich peasant economy" is temporarily preserved. Rich peasants are allowed to retain the land which they cultivate, either alone or with hired hands, and many are permitted to keep ownership of some land which they rent out. But, although they are generally the most efficient producers in any region, rich peasants are not given official encouragement; on the contrary, they are supposed to be politically "neutralized". The temporary policy of tolerating them is dictated by the Communists' desire to keep up agricultural production as much as possible while carrying out their rural revolution.

The essence of the Chinese Communists' agrarian reform, therefore, has been confiscation of landlords' holdings (small portions are allotted to the landlords themselves if they can cultivate it) and redistribution of the land to small, individual, peasant proprietors. Until recently this has been regarded by a great many people in China, including the poor and landless peasants who have received the land, as the final aim of Communist policy. The Chinese Communists formerly did not attempt to disabuse people of this misconception. Although there have been in the past a few direct and many oblique references to future collectivization, the Chinese Communists have played down the fact that land redistribution

is merely a tactical stage on the road to collectivization. Now, however, when completion of agrarian reform is in sight, individual peasant proprietorship, which constituted the declared aim of agrarian reform, is already being labelled "backward".

At the end of last year, Wu Chueh-nung, Chinese Communist Vice-Minister of Agriculture defined three separate stages in the development of Chinese agriculture under Communist rule: (1) the initial step of agrarian reform, (2) the reorganization of agricultural production through mutual-aid teams and agricultural producers' cooperatives, and (3) "collectivization of agriculture on a nationwide scale on the pattern of collective farming in the Soviet Union". The Chinese Communists are now completing the first step and are embarking upon the second. The immediate task was briefly outlined in an editorial on January 1 of this year in the official Peking People's Daily: "In the sphere of agriculture", it said, "we should organize peasants into organizations of mutual-aid, producers' cooperatives, and supply and marketing cooperatives in a more planned manner".

There are a number of theoretical and ideological factors which impel the Chinese Communists to push forward toward collectivization as rapidly as possible. In discussing agricultural problems, they frequently quote Lenin's statement that, "Small-scale production gives birth to capitalism and the bourgeoisie constantly, daily, hourly, with elemental force, and in vast proportions". Individual peasants, with their "petty bourgeois" mentality, are considered to be a constant potential threat to socialism, and collectivization is a method of "proletarianizing" the peasantry. In surveys of selected areas where agrarian reform was completed some time ago, Chinese Communists have noted, with alarm, a resurgence of capitalist features such as usury and renting of land, and a strengthening of the "rich peasant economy" with a trend toward reconcentration of land. This undoubtedly gives considerable urgency, in their minds, to the need for preliminary steps toward collectivization.

Furthermore, the Chinese Communists' general economic program calls for industrialization of the country, and this requires an agricultural economy which can produce a surplus. They firmly believe that large-scale collective methods, with or without mechanization, will increase agricultural production. A recent article in the Peking People's Daily stated, for example: "Chairman Mao has pointed out that land reform is a revolution, and organization a revolution. Both of these revolutions can bolster the productive forces and augment production." Developments in the Soviet Union cast doubt on the proposition that large-scale collective enterprise in agriculture, even if accompanied by mechanization, necessarily results in increased production, but this does not seem to shake the Chinese Communists' faith that it will.

There are other practical justifications for rapidly introducing collective forms of agricultural organization. The experience of the Soviet Union indicates that collectives provide effective means for imposing government controls on the rural

population and for guaranteeing delivery to the state of the grain required for an enlarged bureaucracy and the agricultural raw materials required for state-controlled industry. It is possible to achieve these objectives through organization regardless of whether or not collectivization leads to increased production - or even if it results in lowered production.

The transitional period leading to collectivization in China may be a long one, however. Peasant resistance can be anticipated from the start, and it may become violent as the process develops. But the Chinese Communists, "benefitting from Soviet experience", are apparently planning a gradual process, to minimize the opposition which could be expected from abrupt, radical changes.

In 1949, Mao Tse-tung in On People's Democratic Dictatorship wrote: "The education of the peasantry presents a serious problem. The peasant economy is dispersed. According to the Soviet Union's experience, it takes a long time and much painstaking work before agriculture can be socialized". More recently, Kao Kang, top Chinese Communist leader in Manchuria, said that the correct policy for China is one of "gradually leading the peasants toward collectivization through examples set by state farms and agricultural production cooperatives."

This emphasis on the need for a planned, orderly process leading step-by-step toward collectivization contrasts with what took place in the Soviet Union where, after several sudden advances and retreats, collectivization finally took place during a frenzied four-year period (1928-1932) in which perhaps 5 million kulaks were dispossessed and the mass of peasants were forced into collectives.

The Chinese Communist approach seems to be more calculated, with every stage preparing the way for, and minimizing possible opposition to, the next one, in a sort of dialectical process. This applies even to the first stage of land distribution carried out in the agrarian reform now being completed; despite the violence and passion involved in land redistribution the Chinese Communists seem to keep the process under control to a large degree.

In agrarian reform the first step is liquidation of armed opposition. Next comes mass organization and indoctrination, then (in most areas) rent reduction and repayment of peasants' deposits by the landlords. This is followed by careful preparation for the climax: land classification, class demarcation, and then elimination of any possibility of resistance from the landlords and other opponents of the program. Finally redistribution of the land is carried out.

With very little time lag, steps toward collectivization are now being started. Peasants are first organized into mutual-aid teams. Later these are converted into agricultural producers' cooperatives. Finally, collective farms are organized. It is this step-by-step process which is distinctive about Chinese plans. The goals, including collective farms, state farms, machine tractor stations (or equivalent centers for mechanical improvements of a more simple nature), etc. are adapted from Soviet models, but the process of achieving them, as revealed in Chinese plans, in-

volves a more gradual succession of stages.

In August of this year, the Peking Ministry of Agriculture issued a statement claiming that 35 million peasant families, representing 40 percent of all peasant families in the country, have already been organized and belong to one of the 6 million mutual-aid teams and 3,000 agricultural producers' cooperatives said to be operating in China. This claim may be high, but there is no doubt that strong pressures, intensive "education", and the preferential treatment given to organized peasants are effectively supporting the accelerated drive to get peasants into the first simple forms of collective production units.

Furthermore, the 60 percent of the peasants who have not yet joined any sort of collective production units are not exempted from organization. Except for the rich peasants - who are excluded from almost all organizations - most others belong to peasant associations which, under Communist Party leadership, exercise a considerable degree of control over their members. No overall statistics on peasant association membership are available, but figures for specific regions indicate that virtually all those classified as middle peasants or lower belong to the associations. For example, individual membership in Central-South China is claimed to be 40 million and Southwest China over 33 million, giving a total of 73 million for two of China's six major regions.

In addition, a high percentage of China's peasants now belong to rural supply and marketing cooperatives which regulate sales of agricultural produce and purchases of industrial and consumer goods. Although in theory these cooperatives are a special element in the economy, distinct from both state enterprise and private enterprise, they are in fact government-run and-controlled. Increasingly, they are dominating the markets for agricultural goods and indirectly, therefore, they exert a strong influence on production. Recent official figures reveal that cooperatives in China now have 106 million members, and most of these are members of rural supply and marketing cooperatives.

As already stated, the first step in the organization of collective production units is the establishment of mutual-aid teams, and these are now being rapidly organized all over the country.

There are many gradations and variations of mutual-aid teams. In their simplest form they consist of a small group of families - usually less than half a dozen - who agree to help each other by working jointly and using each other's tools and animals. This type of mutual-aid has historical precedents in China, where it occasionally developed among the poorest peasants particularly in times of natural calamity. Simple teams of this sort are usually temporary and seasonal and disband after accomplishment of the specific tasks which they were organized to perform. In the pre-Communist period mutual-aid of this sort was informal and spontaneous, but the Chinese Communists are now putting it on an organized basis.

One of the first moves required to regularize and develop

more highly-organized mutual-aid teams is to convert them into permanent, year-round units. Such teams require a systematized division of labor, and during slack seasons the team members can work together in collective tasks other than cultivation, such as subsidiary, non-agricultural production. Once this stage has been reached, organized management is required. The Chinese Communists now state that 20 percent of the 6 million mutual-aid teams already established are permanent, non-seasonal units of this sort.

One of the characteristics of simple mutual-aid teams, as contrasted with more developed forms of collective agricultural organization, is the fact that in them the peasants not only retain title to their land but also receive, as private income, the produce from their own plot of land. The Chinese Communists admit that this is the cause of many conflicts and frictions between the members of such a team. Every member is primarily interested in his own land, and therefore wants the team as a whole to work his portion of the land in the best way and under most favorable conditions. Every member, for example, wants his land to be weeded early, to be sown at the best possible time, and to be harvested after maximum ripening but as soon as possible after heavy winds (which cause crop losses). He also wants the team to work long hours on his land and shorter hours elsewhere. Needless to say, every other team member feels the same way.

The Chinese Communists seem to believe, however, that these conflicts within the mutual-aid teams help to prepare the way for "higher forms" of organization, and facilitate adoption of a system of further division of labor and distribution of produce on a more centralized basis. There are several types of organization which they still refer to as mutual-aid teams, but which are actually transitional forms already possessing some of the characteristics of agricultural producers' cooperatives. When several of these teams are merged into larger units, it is relatively easy to convert them into producers' cooperatives.

One large "model mutual-aid team" in North Anhwei Province is described in Chinese Communist publications as follows. A total of 22 families, including 136 villagers, make up the team. Under the direction of a 9-man central committee, 89 full-time workers and 12 half-time workers, who are divided into 3 agricultural production groups, cultivate about 73 acres of land. They share use of the 20 oxen and donkeys, 5 carts, and 27 plows owned by members. 3 families, however, are detached from agricultural work, and spend their time on subsidiary enterprises, including the making of vegetable oils, malt, sugar, and bean curd. Because of this division of labor, there is a need for dividing the joint produce on some basis other than every man taking the produce of his own land. The work of both men and animals is classified, therefore, and distribution is made on the basis of "equal pay for equal work".

Membership in mutual-aid teams is "voluntary", but the Chinese Communists have evolved effective means of applying pressure to force "voluntary" action. Initiative is taken by party members and village political workers. They enlist the assistance of peasant activists (particularly those who have encountered produc-

tion difficulties) and model peasants and start organizing a few families; from then on the process relies on a snowball effect. Once it is under way it is given added impetus by provincial and hsien model workers' conferences, mutual-aid teams' representatives conferences, and training classes for chiefs of mutual-aid teams.

The Communists claim that the mutual-aid teams increase production by overcoming shortages of tools and animals, result in more efficient use of labor, make possible collective efforts to improve irrigation and combat pests, and facilitate organization of surplus farm labor for secondary production. There is some logic to all of these claims, but whether or not the goals are achieved depends on many factors which are difficult to evaluate, such as methods of team management, rates of agricultural taxation, and other factors which affect peasant attitudes and incentives.

The value of the teams from the state's point of view is unquestionable, however. For example, they play a leading role the "patriotic production increase emulation" drives by which efforts are made to stimulate harder work and to guarantee deliveries to the state of agricultural products. The government is now attempting to obtain production pledges from peasants in the form of "patriotic compacts", and organized units are much more convenient to deal with than individual peasants. Over 1 million of the 6 million existing mutual-aid teams are said to have taken part as organized units in such production drives this year.

Another way in which the teams are invaluable from the government's point of view is that they facilitate collection of agricultural products by state agencies. If official claims are to be accepted, the Chinese Communists have made surprising progress in bringing the distribution of major agricultural products under the control of monopolistic state trading companies. These companies deal to the maximum degree through rural supply and marketing cooperatives, and the latter encourage the formation of mutual-aid teams and producers' cooperatives with which they can deal. The pattern which is emerging is as follows. A state trading company which handles one special product will make a contract with supply and marketing cooperatives (often this takes place at a provincial level, and the provincial cooperative organization divides the contract among its lowest village-level subsidiaries), which then make contracts for future deliveries with organized peasant units. Frequently, state marketing companies dealing in textiles, fertilizer, farm tools, and consumer goods are brought in, and "linked" contracts or barter arrangements are made. At the village level this might mean that a mutual-aid team would agree to supply the local supply and marketing cooperative with a specified amount of rice in return for certain amount of fertilizer and cloth. This system gives the government great control over internal trade, and because of its monopolistic nature it facilitates regulation of prices and, indirectly, determination of what will be produced.

The degree to which this system enables the government to monopolize trade in agricultural products can be illustrated by a few official figures. This year 70 percent of the total amount

of wheat marketed in China is to be bought by the state, and in most provinces 50 percent of state buying is being done through cooperatives. All state purchases of cotton are being carried out through cooperatives this year, and by July contracts with cooperatives covered 40 percent of the year's total cotton crop. In Hunan, one of China's major grain-producing provinces, over 90 percent of the new rice reaching the market this year is to be purchased by the state through cooperatives, and the situation is undoubtedly similar in other provinces for which figures are unavailable. Cooperatives are referred to as the "foundation for the state to control industrial raw materials and export goods", and it might be added that mutual-aid teams and agricultural producers' cooperatives appear to be the foundation for efficient operation of supply and marketing cooperatives.

To help develop mutual-aid teams and agricultural producers' cooperatives, the government is now giving all sorts of "economic and technical help and preferential treatment" to them; this assistance gives them an advantage over their individual peasant competitors. "This year", according to one recent report, "the state has extended farming loans to the amount of more than JPY¥3,000,000, 000,000 (roughly US\$135 million), principally to mutual-aid teams and agricultural producers' cooperatives. New farming implements, improved seeds and agricultural drugs and apparatus have also been introduced principally through mutual-aid and cooperative organizations. The state farms are gradually strengthening their technical help to mutual-aid teams and producers' cooperatives, and the state banks in some districts are beginning to sign 'credit contracts' with mutual-aid teams and producers' cooperatives. The supply and marketing cooperatives of various districts also sign 'linking contracts' with mutual-aid teams and agricultural producers' cooperatives. All this," the report ends, with a fine understatement, "plays a great part in helping the development of cooperatives and mutual-aid organizations."

The second stage on the road to collectivization after mutual-aid teams are organized is the establishment of agricultural producers' cooperatives. It appears that generally this will be done by merging several well-developed mutual-aid teams and reorganizing them into cooperatives.

A succinct definition of agricultural producers' cooperatives was given in a recent issue of a Chinese Communist periodical. "An agricultural producers' cooperative", it said, "is an economic organization of unified management and collective labor, based on private ownership of land. It is a higher form than the mutual-aid teams, which are quite common in China at the present time. It is, however, a lower form in comparison with the Socialist collective form, and is therefore a transitional form between the two. Its main characteristic is that members invest their land in the common enterprise, being credited with the corresponding number of shares. Its other features are a combination of agriculture with subsidiary occupations, a certain degree of production planning and division of labor, and a certain amount of common property - including modern agricultural implements".

One of the 3,000-odd producers' cooperatives of this type

claimed to be already organized in China is located in Chuantí village, Shensi. It was established in the Spring of 1951, 9 years after completion of land reform in the area (which was under Communist control during the war) and 8 years after the first mutual-aid team was set up. The cooperative was established by merging 2 of the 10 mutual-aid teams existing in the village in 1951. These two teams had 76 members, including 16 women, from 18 households, and they cultivated about 18 acres of land. Establishment of the cooperative, in which local Communist Party members took the lead, was claimed to be necessary because "the scattered nature of peasant holdings.....became a more and more obvious obstacle to economical production", because it "became necessary to find a planned way to use the manpower which the mutual-aid teams had freed", and because the mutual-aid teams "could not accumulate enough capital".

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Each member of/Chuantí cooperative, according to Communist sources, retains a small plot of land for private use, and the rest, even though theoretically still privately-owned, is collectively farmed. About 7.5 acres, out of a present total of 24 acres, are retained for private use. Cultivation of the remaining 16.5 acres is under centralized management by a committee chosen by the cooperative, and the produce, after taxes, is divided between public savings which are re-invested into the cooperative and private income distributed to members. It is reported that in 1951, of the net profits (i.e. after subtracting costs of production), 8 percent was retained as public savings, 40 percent was distributed to members as dividends on the land they invested, and 52 percent was distributed as wages. The savings were re-invested, 60 percent for production and 40 percent for welfare, education, medical service, and recreation. Land dividends were distributed according to a value given each private share on the basis of its previous yield, and wages were computed on the basis of "work points", every 10 points representing a "work day" defined as "a day's ordinary labor at average efficiency". Various types of labor were rated either more or less than 10 points, and there was a daily checking, and a tabulation every 10 days, of the value of the work done by members.

Many management problems arise in running these producers' cooperatives. The consolidated assignment of labor, the planning of land use for crops, decisions on joint or individual use of tools, remuneration for the use of private tools and animals, assessment of labor, direction and leadership of work teams, accounting and finance, and similar problems must be solved. Probably the thorniest problems involve distribution of the produce. Several alternative methods are used. Sometimes land and labor are both treated as stock. In other cases, a fixed rent is paid on the land, and the remainder is distributed on the basis of work. Occasionally, distribution is based entirely on labor. The Chinese Communists show a definite preference for remuneration based to a large degree upon labor, in order to stimulate hard work, but it is difficult to ignore the right to remuneration for land, since the land is still theoretically private property.

The Communists claim that all sorts of advantages result

from organization of producers' cooperatives, but since the claims are made to advance their program, it is difficult to evaluate them. They claim, for example, that in the cooperative at Chuantu land utilization was improved by consolidation of plots, that acreage was increased (very slightly) by destruction of boundaries, that labor productivity was increased by 22 percent as a result of collective effort and planning, that the entire labor of 8 persons was diverted to subsidiary occupations, that agricultural technique was improved, that collective effort made possible the purchase of better equipment and the setting aside of small plots for experiments and seed selection, that crop yields were raised by 32.7 percent in 1951 over 1950, and that the conflicts of personal interests which had existed in the original mutual-aid teams disappeared. This is a very bright picture - so favorable that one is inclined to believe that it may represent the theory rather than facts typical of the cooperatives.

The final stage in the collectivization process in China will be the transformation of agricultural producers' cooperatives into collective farms. At this stage private ownership gives way to joint ownership of the consolidated farmland.

Although collective farms are not to be widely organized for some years, according to current Chinese Communist plans, experimental models have already been set up, principally in Manchuria and Sinkiang. The "first successful collective farm in China", called "Spark", was organized near the south bank of the Sungari River in Manchuria last year. The experience gained there does not have applicability to most other parts of China, since the farm was established on virgin soil, with a heavy investment of government capital and with unusual advantages such as the existence of a rare tractor station nearby, but it, and other experiments like it, are intended to serve as examples of the final goal and as the basis for propaganda in favor of collectivization. The farm did go through the step-by-step process leading from mutual-aid teams to agricultural producers' cooperative to collective farm, but the process was compressed into the relatively short period of four years.

The Chinese Communists now proclaim that this farm has "proved the possibility of organizing farming as an industry". They admit that, "the age-old desire to own land individually is so deep that for these peasants to have been able to pass beyond that stage and put as much interest into the collective as into their individual property is indeed a tremendous step forward". But they add that, "It shows that the road to larger scale and better standards of agriculture is not quite so difficult as some people might have imagined".

According to articles in Chinese Communist publications, "Spark" has 26 families cultivating about 250 acres of land. It is a full-fledged collective, in which the land and capital are jointly owned, and it is run by a control committee elected by the general farm members meeting. It has a considerably more complex management than existing producers' cooperatives. Its officers include a chairman, vice-chairman, and committee member in charge of finance and food, all three of whom do not take part

in agricultural production. The control committee also has under it a production section (which manages 34 men and 12 women engaged in actual farming), a horticulture section, a dairy section, a rice mill, and a work shop.

The net produce of the farm was reported to be distributed as follows, in 1951; 27.3 percent went to the state in the form of taxation, 10 percent was retained by the collective (this year it is to be increased to 12 or 15 percent), 6 percent went to the state in the form of "donations and contributions", and 56 percent was distributed to peasant members. The amount given to members was based upon a system of assessing labor by "points". Every specific job was rated, and actual crediting of points was based upon efficiency and quality of work, with occasional bonuses for "encouragement". Male labor was divided into 7 grades, ranging from 8 to 11 points, and female labor was classified into 3 grades, from 6 to 7 points. The farm is now considering adoption of a system of "fixed quotas", however, with bonuses and penalties based on actual performance as compared with the quotas.

This is the type of farming which is the main goal of Chinese Communist policies. In addition, however, the Chinese Communists are planning to develop several kinds of state agricultural enterprises modelled, as in the case of collectives, or their prototypes in the Soviet Union. "In order to set an example to the peasants and to enable the state to control some important farming products", the official Peking People's Daily stated on January first of this year, "we should during 1952 greatly develop state farms and strive to operate successfully state farms in every province, every administrative district, every hsien, and every ch'u (under conditions that land is available)". The larger state farms, run by the Farm Management Bureau of the Ministry of Agriculture, are to be set up on waste land and are to include from 2,500 to 10,000 acres of land, which is tremendous for China. A small percentage of the larger state farms are to be fully mechanized, while the remainder are to have improved tools and equipment.

The actual development of state farms to-date probably varies in different parts of the country, but by the middle of this year East China was reported in Chinese Communist publications to have 718 state farms cultivating a total of about 95,000 acres. Of these, 268 are run by ch'u governments, 371 by hsien governments, and 73 by governmental organs of a higher level. 6 of the 718 are classified as really "large-scale" farms, having over 10,000 mow (about 1,666 acres). Manchuria is the region where state farms are mostly widely developed, however, and of the 41 "major mechanized state farms" in China at present, there are 30 in Manchuria, 10 in North China, 3 in East China, 1 in the Central-South, and 1 in the Northwest.

One of the larger state farms is located at Lutai in North China and has about 8,250 acres. Organized in 1949, on wasteland, by 275 cadres and workers sent by the Ministry of Agriculture, this farm now is said to have almost 1,300 workers who are experimenting with Soviet techniques, such as machine sowing of rice and close planting of cotton. It is highly mechanized and has a

tractor brigade, repair shop, and smithy. The workers, who are paid flat wages, are organized into a trade union, and the farm is managed by an administration committee which provides services of various sorts to the workers. Production is regulated by a five-year plan.

State farms of this sort, whose workers "have become members of the rural proletariat of a socialist nature", are intended "to demonstrate to New China's emancipated peasants the superiority of scientific, mechanized farming and collective labor". Their two main specific functions are to "educate the peasants" and to provide technical aid to mutual-aid teams, agricultural producers' cooperatives, and the "peasant masses".

Mechanization of agriculture is also an important aim of the Chinese Communists, even though they believe organization alone can accomplish some of their aims and realize that mechanization is a rather distant goal. "Our organization", a recent Peking People's Daily editorial stated, "is still geared to the basis of existing production tools, or slightly improved tools, and not machinery", but the Chinese Communists are none-the-less proceeding with experiments in mechanization. "In every administrative region, province, and administrative district, we should establish state factories or repair shops to supply the countryside with modern farming implements", the People's Daily said on January 1st this year. There has been very little publicity about such factories and shops, but undoubtedly some have been established. In addition, a few machine tractor stations, modelled after the ones which played a very important role in collectivization in the Soviet Union, have been organized. The first station of this type, with six Soviet tractors, was established in Manchuria this Spring. This station makes plowing contracts with nearby peasants and uses collective farms, agricultural producers' cooperatives, and "good" mutual-aid teams as "key points to carry out services". It also, in theory at least, "enables organizations of cooperation and mutual-aid to develop and improve" because "in using tractors, plots of land must be linked up".

Although the pattern of collectivization in China has become fairly clear, the schedule which Chinese Communist leaders hope to follow is more difficult to determine. A few indications of the planned pace of development have been given, however. The Northeast (Manchuria) can be taken as an example, although it is the most "advanced" of all regions in China and is ahead of the schedule of socialization elsewhere. The Communists claim that at present 80 percent of the peasants in the Northeast are organized, and that a large percentage of the mutual-aid teams there are permanent, year-round ones. The goal for agricultural producers' cooperatives in the Northeast this year is one or two per hsien (county). Several hundred state farms have already been established, and the goal for this year is at least one in every ch'u (the next administrative level above the villages). And a few experimental collectives and tractor stations have been organized. A top Communist leader in the Northeast states that, "With the development of industry the rural villages will be provided with modern farming tools in 5 to 6 years, the agricultural cooperatives shall be the main form of organization for agricul-

tural production, and collective farms and state farms will also move one step forward." He adds that, "In 5 to 6 years, it is expected that modern horse-drawn agricultural machinery will be employed in the greater part of the Northeast..." The Northeast, of course, is much more richly endowed and technologically advanced than any other region of China, so its timetable is undoubtedly ahead of that for the country as a whole.

The program of agricultural collectivization which the Chinese Communists propose to follow raises a number of basic problems and questions.

One of the main problems which Chinese Communist leaders will have to face eventually is how to deal with the rich peasants. Rich peasants - those who farm themselves but own more land than they can cultivate alone - are in general the most efficient agricultural producers in any region. They are also a bulwark of individual capitalist agriculture and a major obstacle to collectivization. In the Soviet Union they were eliminated only after a costly and violent anti-kulak campaign.

The Chinese Communists are frank in admitting that their current policy of tolerating the rich peasants is temporary (at certain periods in the past rich peasants were liquidated along with landlords), but it appears that they hope to cope with the problem by less disruptive means than those used in the Soviet Union. Present Chinese Communist policy seems to be one of isolating the rich peasants and undermining their position by discriminatory treatment. Rich peasants not only are excluded from mutual-aid teams and producers' cooperatives; they are also barred from peasant associations, which is more serious since these associations perform many governmental functions. The Chinese Communists' progressive land tax places a heavy burden on them, and they are also discriminated against in government loan and assistance policies. This may indicate a policy of slowly squeezing them until they gradually are undermined and lose their economic independence - a policy which has been successfully applied to private enterprise in China's cities. In any case, one can be sure that they will eventually be "liquidated as a class", although if they are sufficiently weakened the harsh methods used against Chinese landlords may not be required.

The problem of general peasant resistance is certain to increase as Chinese Communists' collectivization program develops, because it is not only the rich peasants who favor private ownership of land. Regardless of propaganda in favor of collectives, the Chinese peasant is likely to retain his deep-rooted desire to own his own piece of land, and it is difficult to believe that collectivization can be achieved in China except by strongly coercive measures.

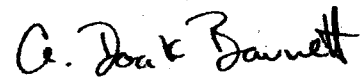
The probability of strong peasant resistance even if it is confined by police-state methods to passive resistance, is one of the factors which makes the Chinese Communists' belief that collectivization will lead to increased agricultural production very much open to question. Despite certain obvious technical advantages which collectivization in theory can bring, such as

consolidated use land (the fragmentation of individual holdings is a serious problem in China), the productivity of land cannot be divorced from the incentives and attitudes of those cultivating it. This has been illustrated in the Soviet Union by the wide discrepancy between the output of collective land and that of private plots retained by members of collective farms. (The latter are more productive because the peasants devote more and better care to them). It may be even more true in China, where traditionally farming has been so intensive (with consequent high per acre yields) that it has often been described as "gardening"; less enthusiasm could cause a considerable drop in production.

The nature of Chinese agriculture has, in fact, raised many questions in the minds of non-Marxist observers as to the applicability, even in theory, of collectivist conceptions of state-run "large-scale mechanized farming" to China. The ratio of labor to land is very high in China. Methods of cultivation are extremely intensive. Mechanization of wet farming (which prevails over much of China) is certainly very difficult, and the prospects of China producing enough farm machinery to mechanize even dry farming regions are remote. And it is difficult to foresee rapid industrialization in China, which would be necessary to absorb agricultural labor displaced by mechanization.

There is no doubt, however, that collectivization, to the extent that it can be carried out in China, will improve the government's control over the rural population and over the produce of the agricultural economy. This, in fact, is undoubtedly the main motive and justification for it. The peasant does not want it, but the state requires it to proceed with its plans for socialization.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "A. Doak Barnett".

A. Doak Barnett.

Received New York 10/7/52.